

Amendments to the Claims

1. (currently amended) A device adapted to assist the sterilisation of a limb surface, and comprising:

a flexible tubular sleeve having a proximal end and a distal end, the sleeve being closed at [[one]] the distal end[[.]] and being shaped and sized so as to have a circumference configured to loosely fit, in use, around the limb of a patient whose limb surface is to be sterilised; and

respective elastic limb-sealing means radially inward of the flexible tubular sleeve, each located close to or at [[a]] the respective ends of said sleeve, and each ~~capable of forming, in use,~~ configured to form a seal between the sleeve and the limb of a patient,

wherein the respective elastic limb-sealing means extend radially inwardly from the circumference of the tubular sleeve to form respective elastically deformable holes for forming the respective seals, the holes having an unstretched circumference substantially smaller than the circumference of the flexible tubular sleeve.

2. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein at least one of the limb-sealing means comprises a perforated, elastic diaphragm.

3. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein at least one of the limb-sealing means comprises a substantially frustoconical portion.

4. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the limb-sealing means are so constructed as to create a wiping action when slid, in use, along a patient's limb.

5. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein both ends of the said sleeve are initially closed.

6. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the sleeve is substantially transparent.

7. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein at least one of any sealed end of the sleeve is perforated, nicked, weakened, or otherwise adapted to assist opening of that sealed end.
8. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 further comprising at least one tab or loop to assist pulling the sleeve, in use, along a patient's limb.
9. (currently amended) The device of claim 1 further comprising ~~fastening means~~ one or more fasteners to hold the two ends of the sleeve close to each other, whilst the sleeve is positioned on a patient's limb.
10. (currently amended) The device of claim 1 with an easily rupturable container of sterilising agent inside ~~(in use)~~ the sleeve.
11. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 further comprising a valve arrangement to allow egress of air from within the sleeve whilst the sleeve is positioned on a patient's limb.
12. (currently amended) The device of claim 1 ~~further comprising a limb-sealing~~ wherein at least one of the limb-sealing means ~~which~~ is sized and shaped to be extendable beyond ~~an opening formed by removal of the sealed end~~ the respective end of the device sleeve.
13. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein at least one of the limb sealing means adapts to fit limbs of differing circumference without the need to cut sections from the device.
14. (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein a resealable portal is provided.

15.-22. (canceled)

23. (new) A method of preparing a surface of a limb of a patient for surgery comprising:

inserting the limb into a proximal end of a sterilizing sheath, the sterilizing sheath including:

a flexible tubular sleeve having the proximal end and a distal end and shaped and sized so as to have a circumference configured to loosely fit around the limb of the patient whose limb surface is to be sterilized, and

respective elastic limb-sealing means radially inward of the flexible tubular sleeve, each located close to or at the respective ends of the sleeve, and each configured to form a seal between the sleeve and the limb of the patient;

spreading a sterilizing agent on the surface of the limb while the limb is inside the sleeve;

sliding the distal end of the tubular sleeve over the limb until the distal end is near the proximal end of the tubular sleeve.

24. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein, prior to sliding, the distal end of the tubular sleeve is sealed and wherein the method further comprises opening the sealed distal end of the tubular sleeve before the sliding.

25. (new) The method of claim 23 further comprising:
opening a sachet of sterilizing agent located within the tubular sleeve after inserting the limb.

26. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein the sliding of the distal end further comprises wiping excess fluid from the limb.

27. (new) The method of claim 23 wherein, prior to inserting, the proximal end of the tubular sleeve is sealed and wherein the method further comprises opening the sealed proximal end of the tubular sleeve before inserting.

28. (new) The device of claim 1, wherein the elastic limb-sealing means comprises a sheet of elastic material extending radially inwardly from the tubular sleeve and defining the elastically deformable hole.